

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN JO 02304 211708Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SS-15 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 NSC-05 JUSE-00 SEC-01 EUR-12 PA-01 PRS-01
USIA-06 CU-02 /065 W
-----211712Z 124661 /50

R 202209Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7476
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2304

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS
SUBJECT: FIGUERES/ODUBER/VESCO: THE POT KEEPS BOILING

REF: SAN JOSE 2266

1. SUMMARY. FIGUERES SAYS THAT ODUBER GOVERNMENT HAS NOT
STEMMED CORRUPTION AS ODUBER PROMISED WHEN INAUGURATED
THREE YEARS AGO. AN OPPOSITION PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
LEVIES LEGAL CHARGES AGAINST ODUBER AND VESCO. GOVERNMENT
PARTY FIGURES PRIVATELY VOICE FEAR OF ADVERSE EFFECT ON
THEIR CANDIDATE'S CHANCES BECAUSE OF WHAT FIGUERES IS DOING.
END SUMMARY.

2. MOST OF THE CAST OF CHARACTERS IN COSTA RICA'S
ONGOING SCANDAL RE VESCO CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE 1974
ODUBER CAMPAIGN AND CORRUPTION IN THE ODUBER GOVERN-
MENT CONTINUE TO MAKE NEWS. JOSE FIGUERES, IN HIS
5TH ARTICLE IN A SERIES OF COMMENTARIES (MORE TO
COME) PRINTED MAY 20 DID HIS SHARE TO KEEP THE POT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN JO 02304 211708Z

BOILING BY FIRST, REVIEWING THE CONTENTS OF HIS
FIRST FOUR ARTICLES, AND SECOND, MAKING THE POINT
ONCE AGAIN THAT CORRUPTION EXISTS IN THE ODUBER
ADMINISTRATION. FIGUERES CALLED ATTENTION TO
ODUBER'S INAUGURAL CALL IN 1974 "TO PUT A STOP TO
CORRUPTION," AND STATED, IN SO MANY WORDS, THAT
ODUBER HAS NOT DONE SO. FIGUERES CONTINUED THAT

HE WOULD RESIST PARTICIPATING IN AN OPEN FIGHT WITH ODUBER (SIC), AND STATED THAT WHILE NOT DENYING HE HAD HIS DIFFERENCES WITH THE PRESIDENT, FOR THE TIME BEING HE WOULD REFUSE TO AIR THEM PUBLICLY.

3. THE HUE AND CRY OVER VESCO CORRUPTION CONTINUES IN THE MEDIA. "LA NACION" AND "LA REPUBLICA" HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY SHARP; "LA NACION" HAS BEGUN ITS OWN EDITORIAL PAGE ANALYSIS OF CORRUPTION IN THE FIGUERES AND ODUBER GOVERNMENTS. DECLARATIONS OF TWO WOMEN'S GROUPS, THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S CIVIC LEAGUE, AND A WOMEN'S GROUP FROM CARTAGO, FOR THE PRESIDENT TO EXPEL VESCO AND/OR RESIGN, HAVE BEEN GIVEN PROMINENT PUBLICITY. INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS AND OTHER GROUPS ARE ALSO MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS ALONG THESE LINES.

4. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS TAKEN A LEGAL TACK: CANDIDATE RODRIGO CARAZO HAS MADE A KIARGE TO THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF ELECTORAL VIOLATIONS AGAINST PRESIDENT ODUBER AND VESCO BASED ON FIGUERES' DECLARATIONS IN THE "NEW REPUBLIC" (SAN JOSE 1965). CARAZO CITES VIOLATIONS OF THE ELECTORAL LAW, THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE PENAL CODE. HE RECALLED THAT SIMILAR CHARGES HAD BEEN MADE TO THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (TSE) A YEAR AGO, BUT THAT PROOFS SUCH AS NOW ARE AVAILABLE WERE LACKING THAT TIME;) (THE TSE THEN RULED AGAINST CARAZO.) THE PUBLIC MINISTRY, IN EFFECT ACTING AS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN JO 02304 211708Z

GRAND JURY, WILL INVESTIGATE CARAZO'S ALLEGATIONS. IN THEORY AT LEAST, THIS COULD RESULT IN A TRIAL.

5. OPPOSITION POLITICIANS ARE RESPONDING TO THE NATIONAL LIBERATION PARTY'S LEGISLATIVE CONTINGENT'S CALL FOR VESCO TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY (SAN JOSE 2266) BY RECALLING FORCEFULLY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CLAMORING FOR VESCO'S EXPULSION FOR YEARS. AT SAME TIME OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE SPEAKING FAVORABLY OF LIBSSRATION DEPUTY CORRALES BOLANOS' EFFORT TO MOVE THE LEGISLATIVE'S INVESTIGATION ALONG.

6. PRESIDENT ODUBER REFUSES TO RESPOND TO PRESS QUERIES ABOUT SUBJECT. IN VISIT TO COUNTRY-SIDE MAY 19, ODUBER ALLOWED HIS TEMPER TO FLARE WHEN GROUP OF STUDENTS PUBLICLY COMPALINED ABOUT UNKEPT PROMISES REGARDING THEIR LOCAL NEEDS. IN A MOST UNCHARACTERISTIC MOVE, ODUBER TURNED HIS BACK ON STUDENTS, RETURNED TO HIS HELICOPTER, AND DEPARTED FOR HIS FARM IN

GUANACASTE. POLITICAL COMMENTATORS IMMEDIATELY JUMPED ON THIS INCIDENT AS EVIDENCE THAT THE SCANDAL IS GETTING TO HIM.

7. ROBERT VESCO HAS ATTEMPTED TO REMAIN SILENT. HIS LAWYER, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO MAKE STATEMENTS THAT A) VESCO IS NOT SEEKING COSTA RICAN CITIZENSHIP AND B) THAT VESCO CANNOT LEAVE COSTA RICA BECAUSE COURTS HERE WILL NOT SO PERMIT (DUE TO ONGOING LOCAL SECURITY FRAUD CASE).

8. COMMENT: PLN POLITICAL FIGURES PRIVATELY DESCRIBE THE SCANDAL AS WITHOUT DOUBT THE GRAVEST POLITICAL PROBLEM ODUBER HAS FACED IN HIS PRESIDENCY. THEY ARE JITTERY ABOUT WHAT EFFECT WILL BE ON THE PARTY, ITS CANDIDATE, THE REST OF THE ODUBER GOVERNMENT (UPON WHICH THE PLN CAMPAIGN IS IN PART BEING BUILT), AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAN JO 02304 211708Z

THE PERSONAL IMAGE OF DANIEL ODUBER--IN THAT ORDER. THEY ARE PAINFULLY AWARE THAT WHAT KEEPS THE POT BOILING PRIMARILY IS THE INPUT OF FIGUERES, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S AND PARTY'S NEED TO RESPOND SOMEHOW FEEDS THE SITUATION. THE REACTION OF THE OPPOSITION POLITICAL FORCES, OF COURSE, AND MEDIA IS THE OTHER ELEMENT. THE LATTER, WITH VISIONS OF WATERGATE IN THEIR HEADS, WILL SIMPLY NOT LET IT GO.
KILDAY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, ALLEGATIONS, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANJO02304
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770182-0248
Format: TEL
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770535/aaaabdzi.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4cb2468d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SAN JOSE 2266
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2434794
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIGUERES/ODUBER/VESCO: THE POT KEEPS BOILING
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS, (FIGUERES, JOSE), (VESCO, ROBERT L)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4cb2468d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009